

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNTAIN
THE GOD WHO WANTS TO BE OUR FATHER
PASTOR TIMOTHY GREEN

On a mountainside in Galilee, Jesus preached His first sermon, a message about the coming kingdom of God. It was there on the mountain that He introduced the disciples and surrounding crowd to a new perspective of God, a groundbreaking revelation. He used prayer as an illustration to deliver these truths.

Matt 6:9-13 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Those listening to Jesus were familiar with prayer. Prayer was foundational in the Jewish culture. The people prayed in the local synagogue and in their homes. It was a common custom among the faithful. But Jesus wanted them to understand the true nature of prayer. He wanted to make sure that His followers avoided two extremes when it came to praying. First, He did not want them to make prayer a public spectacle, like those he labeled as hypocrites. Second, He wanted to make sure that their prayers were not mechanical, that they were something more than monotonous repetitions.

Jesus emphasized to them that prayer was not to be a mindless ritual or something to be done to try and impress others but rather a means of communicating with their Heavenly Father. Jesus wanted the people to know that God wasn't distant. He was close to them. He was near and He was concerned about their needs and He wanted to provide for those He considered His children.

What better way to teach them about prayer than by way of a prayer, a model of sorts, one they could use as a guide. So Jesus said to them, "Pray like this. Begin your prayer by saying, Our Father which are in heaven.

In Aramaic, the word Father is the word Abba, which means daddy. Seventeen times in this sermon, Jesus used this word to describe God. Jesus was making a strong point regarding the relationship God has with those in His family.

There is nothing like the sound of a child's voice to the ear of their daddy. A smile comes to my face whenever I see that one of my kids are calling me on the phone.

Our Heavenly Father feels the same way about us. He enjoys it whenever we take the time to pick up the phone, drop to our knees, or find us a place of prayer. God enjoys hearing our voice.

Yes, He is the God who is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent, but He is also the God who is our Father. He is loving, caring and accessible to every one of us here today.